

THEY became a SIGN

A

109

SERMON

PREACH'D

On the Solemn OCCASION

OF THE

Deaths of the LORDS,

WHO WERE

Beheaded on *Tower-Hill* for HIGH-
TREASON, *Feb. 24. 1715-6.*

By SAMUEL ROSEWELL, M. A.

The Second Edition, Corrected.

ὁ κύριος εἰς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν παρεῖτε τὴν ὁδὸν ἀδικίας ἡλικίου τοῦ λαοῦ
τῷ λοιπῷ βιβλίῳ ὁμοίῳ ἐκείνῳ τῷ πληθύνει ἰσο-
ρροῦν εἰς τοὺς σωτήριας, ἀπαθὴ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἀκρίβεια
τοῦ τῆς τῶν ἡμετέρας καὶ κολάσεως. Ita precatus est Moyſes,
Teste Joſepho Ant. Jud. L. iv. C. 3.

LONDON:

Printed for M. LAWRENCE, at the *Angel* in
the *Poultry*. 1716.

(Price Four Pence.)

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A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

On the solemn OCCASION

OF THE

Deaths of the LORDS, who
were Beheaded, &c.

NUMBERS XXVI. 10. last Clause.

— *And they became a Sign.*



THE Words are spoken of *Korath, Dathan and Abiram*, and their seditious Accomplices, who had been famous in the Congregation of Israel, and Men of Renown; till they render'd themselves Infamous by their vile Rebellion against Moses, whom GOD had appointed King in Jeshurun: Upon the Account of which, and of that Penal, Ignominious Death, that was the just Reward of their insolent Wickedness, their Names have since descended with Re-

proach and a Blot, through all the Ages of the Church.

UPON Occasionally mentioning these Men, the sacred Historian digresses from the Design he had in Hand; and as tho' they were not to be Named without some Note of Infamy and Disgrace, observes concerning them; *This is THAT Dathan and Abiram* --- As *Abaz* is distinguished in like manner, *This is THAT King Abaz*, q. d. That Vile and Infamous Wretch: *This is That Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the Congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the Company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD; And the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up with Korath, when that Company died, what time the Fire devour'd two hundred and fifty Men: AND THEY BECAME A SIGN.*

Ver. 9, 10.

Numb.
xvi.

IT is plain, the Spirit of GOD intends we should take some special Notice of so signal and memorable an Occurrence; I mean, of the Sin of these Seditious Men, and of the Punishment that was inflicted upon them: Otherwise we should not have so large and particular an account of it, as is contain'd in one whole Chapter; nor be so frequently refer'd to it by the inspir'd Writers in the *Old Testament* and in the *New*: And seeing it has so much room in our *Bible*, it cannot be an improper Employment in our *solemn Assemblies*, to be meditating on, and endeavouring to improve any other Event of the same Nature; and very like to this, in most of the awful and important Parts of it. It is with this View that I have chose to discourse from *this Text* at present: With Reference to which I shall enquire,

I. IN-

I. INTO the CHARACTER of the Persons, of whom it informs us, that THEY became a Sign.

II. INTO the REASON of their Suffering at such a Rate as that suggests.

III. INTO the MANNER how they became a Sign, and the particular IMPORT and Meaning of that Expression. And then I shall

IV. CONCLUDE with some Inferences of Truth and Duty from what shall be offer'd to our Thoughts.

I. I AM to enquire into the CHARACTER of these Persons of whom the Text informs us, that THEY became a Sign. And

First, I OBSERVE that they were Men of Eminence, and of distinguished Quality. Korath who was Head of the Faction, as appears from St. Jude's calling it *the Gain-saying of Core*, was a Chief Man of his Tribe, and a near Relation of the supream Magistrate, Moses: He was the Son of Izhar, which Izhar was the Brother of Amram, the Father of Moses; to whom therefore he was related as Cousin-German. He was also possess'd of a great Estate, as * Josephus frequently intimates. Of Dathan and Abiram, it is said in the Verse before the Text, that they were famous in the Congregation; they were some of the first Rank in the Tribe of Reuben, and excell'd in Wealth, as the same Author reports †. We read also of ON, the Son of Peleth, a considerable Man of the same Tribe, who was Confederate

* Κορὴς ἐβροχίον ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα καὶ γινῆ ἐν πλείοις ἀποφύτοι.
Ant. Jud. L. 4. c. 2. & alibi in eodem capite.

† Ibid.

with the rest in the beginning of this Mutiny : but there is no further Account of him in the remaining Parts of the Story ; either because he repented of his Sin, and withdrew himself betimes ; or else, he did not render himself so remarkable and obnoxious as the others.

NOW these Prime Men drew into their Conspiracy two hundred and fifty Persons more, who were all Men of some Distinction and Figure ; for they are call'd *Princes of the Assembly, famous in the Congregation, and Men of Renown* ; possibly they were eldest Sons and Heads of Families : and some * say, " Members of the Great Council of the Nation, whom *Moses* was wont to call and advise with about the Publick Affairs of it. They were in *Comitiis Senatuum*, in the great Assembly, which sat in Parliament at the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, which was the Place where they met together."

Numb.
xvi. 2.

X. 2.

THUS the Faction gather'd Strength, by the Seduction of so great a Number of eminent Persons, who must have no small Influence over the meaner sort ; many of whom, on the Account of some Dependances on them, or of some Prejudices conceiv'd in their Favour, would be ready to comply with any thing they should propose, and to follow wherever they should see fit to lead them.

MEN of Riches and Renown have great Opportunities to promote the Cause of Sedition and Faction, whenever they have Hearts to do so : And their Avarice and Ambition does oftentimes dispose them to try the Efficacy of their Influence that way : When, by how much the

* *Vid. Bishop Stillingfleet on Jude 11.*

greater that proves, by so much the more is their Guilt enhanced, and the sorer Punishment becomes their due. Great Men, when Strangers to Goodness, and abandon'd to their Lusts, are the most capable Instruments Satan employs, to promote the Designs of his Kingdom, and to fill the World with Confusion and Horrors.

IT has been a very unhappy Circumstance in the late monstrous Rebellion, that so many Men of Name and Figure have given into it; and expos'd themselves to the Resentments and just Revenge of their Country, by so base and unnatural an Enterprize: That some distinguish'd as Nobles, some bearing the venerable Name of Senators; with others, famous in the Island for their exalted Stations, or their great Estates, should sink themselves into so much Ignominy and Contempt, by prostituting their Interests and Names in so detestable a Cause. We are told by a * *great Authority*, that the most notorious Instruments of those wicked Purposes, which have issued in this Rebellion, were countenanc'd by particular Marks of publick Favour and Distinction; and that false and dangerous Notions of a sole Hereditary Right to the Imperial Crown of these Realms, were propagated and encourag'd by Persons in the highest Trust and Employments, contrary to the ancient, undoubted and established Laws of these Kingdoms.

Secondly, THERE were several of the Tribe of Levi amongst them, who were themselves Levites by Office; particularly Korah, the prime Incendiary; who is on this Account reminded by Moses, that GOD had brought him near to himself. But besides him, there appears to have been a

Numb.
xvi. 1.

* House of Commons in the Articles of Impeachment.
consider-

Ver. 7, 8, those Words of Moses, *Ye take too much upon you,*
 9, 10. *ye Sons of Levi: Hear I pray you, ye Sons of Levi,*
seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the GOD
of Israel hath separated you from the Congregation of
Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the Service
of the Tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before
the Congregation to minister unto them? &c.

THE Levites were nearer to GOD than the
 other Tribes, tho' not so near as the Priests; They
 only were to approach the Altar, and to offer In-
 cense and Sacrifice; while the Levites were to wait
 on the Sons of Aaron in the Service of the House of the
 LORD in the Courts, and in the Chambers, and in the
 purifying of all holy Things: They, in Com-
 mon with the Priests, were to sing the Praises
 of GOD, and to teach the People according to the
 good Word of the LORD. Now this was high
 and honourable Work, as Moses intimates in
 those expostulatory Words, *Seemeth it but a*
small Thing unto you? This might well employ
 their Time, their Strength and their Zeal; and
 obliged them to all possible Care and Exactness,
 that by their exemplary Lives and Behaviour,
 they might further instruct the People to whom
 they ministred, in the important Lessons of Pie-
 ty towards GOD, and of Subjection and Duty
 to those whom He had set over them. But in-
 stead of this, they themselves were Traitors,
 Heady, High-minded, and (as appears from Moses's
 Address to them,) the chief Boutefeux in the pre-
 sent Rebellion. Levites, and yet Rebels! Levites,
 and yet Ring-Leaders in the Rebellion!

I CARE not in any Words of mine own, to
 recount what Cause has been given to bewail
 and expose the unchristian Temper and Carriage
 of too great a Number of Men in Holy Orders:
 What Influence they have had in raising the Spi-

rit of Faction, and blowing the Fire that had like to have consumed us. The same *Great Authority*, to which I referr'd before, has published to the World, that "the Holy Scriptures were
 " wrested, and the most wholesome Doctrines of
 " the Church of *England* perverted and abused
 " by *these Men*, in the most publick and scandalous
 " Manner, in order to condemn the Justice
 " of the late happy Revolution; and thereby to
 " sap and undermine the Foundation of our
 " happy Establishment: And again, Tho' many
 " of the Conspirators are avowed Professors of
 " the Popish Religion, yet the more effectually to
 " cover and disguise their most wicked and traitorous
 " Designs, and to delude his Majesty's Subjects, they did prevail on and procure several
 " Men in Holy Orders, Ministers of the Church
 " of *England*, and who had before that time, abjured the Pretender, to accompany, countenance and abett the said most traiterous Enterprize, and in several Places in the Counties where the said Conspirators, their Complices and Confederates then were, to pray for the said Pretender in the publick Churches, as King of these Realms." And some of the Chief amongst those who were guilty, have been Tenderly and Wisely caution'd, * "Not to rely any longer on those Directors of their Consciences, by whose Conduct they had, very probably, been led into that miserable Condition they were in."

NOW such an Ascendency had these *Jewish Grantees*, and those *Sons of Levi*, who were their Associates, over the Ignorant and Unwary *Vulgar*, that great Numbers of these were presently engaged, and obstinately byass'd to their Party;

* *Lord High-Steward's Speech.*

Numb. xvi. 18. for we read that *Korah gather'd ALL the Congregation against them, unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*; by which it should seem that the Generality, at least, had given in to the Faction; which further appears by the *universal* Murmuring against *Moses* and *Aaron*, upon the Occasion of that surprizing Punishment and Death, inflicted by GOD's immediate Hand on all the Principal Men in the Insurrection.

Ver. 41.

NOTHING is more easy than for designing and crafty Men to delude the giddy Populace with false Colours, and specious Pretensions to what they never mean. *They* are ready to admit the most absurd and inconsistent Things that can be suggested, when *They* are artfully prepared for it, and *These* industriously spread amongst them: And having once received the *Lye*, have no Inclination to enquire into it, or be informed of Matters as they really are. *They* are wont to be fond of Novelty and Change, and therefore readily close with what may assist towards the introducing of *These*, how false and groundless soever. Besides, the thoughtless Multitude are wont to have but little, if any Regards to GOD and to their Duty, and therefore are the more easily drawn into base and wicked Designs; which seems to be the Reason of that Divine Law, *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil.*

Exod. xxiii. 2.

UPON *These* Accounts I cease to wonder that the Dregs of the *British* People have every where taken side with some more exalted *Sons of Belial* against GOD, and his Anointed: That such great Numbers of the Irreligious and Profane, of Thieves, Lyars and common Prostitutes, and such-like, have either enter'd into the Tents of *these* Men, or wish well to their Cause. I cease to wonder, that while they have taken the causeless Cry of the Church's Danger from

the

the Mouths of the factious *Sons of Levi* ; They have been really attempting to overthrow the Church, and banish the Religion of Christ ; that its Place might be supply'd with Antichristian Superstition and Pageantry.

THUS you have the *Character* of the Persons to whom the Text refers. We are next,

II. TO enquire into their Crime, in which you have the *Reason* why *They became a Sign*. It has been already signify'd that their Sin was *Rebellion*. Under this Head I shall take Notice of the *Rebellion* it self ; of the *Spring and Source* from which it had its Rise ; of the *Measures* by which it was formed at the first, and advanced afterwards ; and lastly, of some *special Aggravations* with which it was attended.

First, THE *Rebellion* it self. Now that was directed against both GOD and their Governours ; against GOD, because against their Governours. We read in the Verse preceding that in which the Text is, that *They strove against Moses and against Aaron* --- when they strove against the LORD. The Greek renders it, **They made Insurrection* ; and in the beginning of Chap. xvi. we are told, *They rose up before Moses, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. Moses was their supream Magistrate, and as such is stiled King in Jeshurun* ; he maintained the Dignity, and discharged the Duties of a Sovereign Prince : That they charge him with *making himself altogether a Prince over them* ; tho' he was so far from usurping that Dignity, that he would gladly have declined it at first, and have resigned it afterwards, if GOD would have given him Leave. Aaron was the High-Priest,

Prov.
XXIV. 21.

V. 22.

* ἡτοι ἐγένετο οἱ ἐπιδρωγὸν ἐπὶ Μωϋσῆ, &c.

appointed to that Office by *Moses*, in pursuance of an exprefs Command he received from **GOD** for that Purpose ; that He took not to himself that Honour, till he was called to it of **GOD**, as the Author to the *Hebrews* bears witness, and as farther appears from *Exodus* xxviii. *begin*. Their Titles were so clear and indubitable, that *Moses* was confident of **GOD**'s appearing in Vindication of them. *Ye shall know*, says he, *that the LORD hath sent me to do all these Works, for I have not done them of mine own Mind* ; he means his undertaking the Government, and his appointing *Aaron* to the Priesthood.

Numb.
xvi. 28.

NOW as *Moses* and *Aaron* were the Ministers of **GOD**, who derived their Authority from his Commission, and acted by Virtue of that, the Rebellion against *Them* did reach to **GOD** Himself, and center'd in Him. *Thou*, says *Moses*, and all thy Company are gathered together against the **LORD**. They did, in effect, contest His Rights who is, upon the highest Reasons, absolute Sovereign in Heaven and Earth. They opposed themselves to Him, whose undoubted Prerogative it is to do whatsoever seems good in his Sight.

Numb.
xvi. 11.

AS Government is an Ordinance of **GOD**, appointed by Him for the Good of the World ; and Governours, ruling by Him, are His Vicegerents, and as such delegated Gods ; so He expressly demands our Subjection and Homage to them : That to resist and oppose Them, while They are discharging the Duties of their exalted Stations, is to fly in the Face of **GOD**, and expose our selves to his vindictive Strokes.

AND how full of the blackest Guilt must the present Rebellion appear to be, when these Things are duly considered ? Our Rightful and Lawful Sovereign, King *GEORGE*, is, not only in common with other good Kings, the Vicegerent

gerent of GOD, and *his Minister for Good*; but that wise and sovereign Disposer of Things, has conducted him to the Throne, asserted his Rights, and espoused his Interest, in a more eminent and extraordinary Manner; on which I had occasion to enlarge in a former Discourse *.

HE cannot be justly charged with *taking too much upon Him*, or with *making himself a Prince* over us; when without any previous Motion of his Own, His Right to govern us was settled and confirmed, by all that Legal Authority from which any such Right can be had; I mean the Crown and the Parliament: By these He was chose, invited and authorized to come and save us from a long Succession of sworn Enemies to our Religion and Laws; who could have no Right to rule over us, when the whole Legislative Authority had set them aside; and that upon such Principles as appear to wise and reasonable Men to be incontestable, and to carry their own Evidence with them: That the Laws of our Country, the Choice of the People, and the Providence of GOD discovering it self in These, and in many remarkable Instances besides, have happily concurr'd to make Him our King. But these Things have been fully express'd in a few comprehensive Words. "† His Majesty affected not the Crown by Force, or by the Arts of Ambition, but succeeded Peaceably and Legally to it; and on the decease of her late Majesty, without Issue, became undoubtedly the next in Course of Descent capable of succeeding to the Crown, by the Law and Constitution of this Kingdom; as it stood declar'd some Years before the

* Vide the King's true Divine Right, &c.

† Lord High-Steward's Speech.

“ Crown was expressly limited to the House of
 “ *Hanover*. This Right was acknowledg’d, and
 “ the Descent of the Crown limited or con-
 “ firmed accordingly, by the whole Legislature
 “ in two successive Reigns ; and more than once
 “ in the Latter. — And we have been remind-
 “ ed, that when we were * “ under most deplor-
 “ able Circumstances, it pleas’d Almighty GOD
 “ in his infinite Wisdom, to call to himself the
 “ late *Queen Anne*, and by a Concurrence of
 “ many most wonderful Providences, to give a
 “ quiet and peaceable Accession to his present
 “ most Gracious Majesty to the Throne of his
 “ Ancestors ; to which he was receiv’d with
 “ one full Voice and Consent of Tongue and
 “ Heart, and the united Joy of every good
 “ Subject and good Protestant, as their only
 “ lawful and rightful Liege Lord.” And how
 “ wonderfully has GOD appear’d in his Behalf
 “ ever since ! He has vindicated his Rights, by
 “ scattering and confounding his implacable En-
 “ mies ; By causing the Crown to flourish on his
 “ Head, in spite of all their Enmity and Opposi-
 “ tion ; while *They* are cloathed with Shame. A
 “ Rebellion against such a Prince must strike at
 “ GOD himself. I am,

*Secondly, TO take Notice of the Springs and
 Source from whence the Opposition to Moses had its Rise.*
 Now from the *Envy* and the *Ambition* of the
 chief Incendiaries, sprung those fatal Commoti-
 ons which cost *Israel* so dear : *Envy* at their Su-
 periors, and an *Ambition* to be in their Places.

THEY envoy’d *Moses* in the *Camp*, and *Aaron*
 the *Saint* of the *LORD*. And the Language of
 their Lips discover’d that this lay at their Hearts.

Ps. cvi.
 16.

* *House of Commons in the Articles of Impeachment.*

Korah was envious at *Aaron's* Preferment to the Priesthood; and some think further incens'd, when *Moses* promoted *Elizaphan* the Son of *Uzziel*, Numb. iii. 30. to be Chief of the House of the Father of the Families of the *Kohathites*: He being descended from the elder House; while *Elizaphan* was a Branch of the Younger. And being disgusted at these Things, he is thought to have set himself to provoke the Emulation and Envy of *Dathan* and *Abiram* against *Moses*, to whom GOD had assign'd the first Post of Honour; and so had depriv'd their Tribe of the Privilege of Primogeniture. That this was the Fault of *Moses* and *Aaron*; viz. GOD had advanc'd them to so much Dignity and Honour; not that they had sinn'd against Heaven, or wronged *Israel* in any thing. Their Enemies could not take Umbrage at any Male-Administration, any unrighteous Proceeding, or so much as an unhappy Mistake; but fret at the Conduct of GOD, and the Choice that his Wisdom had made.

IN the mean time they *Ambitiously* aspire to those exalted Stations, to which they were not call'd, and for which they were no way qualify'd. *Korah's* Ambition inspires him with a Design of ejecting *Aaron* out of the Priesthood, and usurping the Office himself; as appears from that Reprimand of *Moses*, Seek ye the Priesthood also? Nor did he only engage his Confederate *Levites* to assist in this vile Design, but seems to have prevail'd with *Dathan* and *Abiram* to assert a pretended Right to the Civil Government, and to attempt the Deposing of *Moses*, that they might impose themselves upon the People; for while the Government continu'd in *Moses's* Hands, *Korah* could never expect to succeed in his own ambitious Design.

FACTION has been truly described, *The Madness of Many, in order to serve the Ends of a Few* *. What Numbers of miserable People are frequently drawn into Sedition and Tumult, by some Popular Pretences, to what is never intended? When the devilish Lusts of a few Men, their Pride and Ambition, their Envy and Revenge, are at the Bottom of all. *Josephus* observes of *Korah*, that while he was pursuing the vain Projects he had form'd for raising himself, he would seem all the while to be taking care of the Publick †.

THUS have *We* seen an Army of Rebels exposing their own Lives, murdering their Fellow-Subjects, and laying their Country waste, under Pretence of defending — What? a meer Chimera: A Divine, Hereditary, Indefeasible Right to the Crown; and of Rescuing the Church of England from Danger: Whereas the Real Cause is no other than the [Intolerable] Disappointment of some Envious, Ambitious, and Perjur'd Men; who are not intrusted with Publick Affairs, that they may not Betray their Country; and for that Reason would glut their Malice and Revenge on those who stand in their Way. Thus you see the Spring of both Rebellions.

Thirdly, LET us take notice of the Measures by which they were form'd at first, and after advanc'd to the greatest Head. Now these were egregious Lyes and Falshood, unreasonable Murmurings, and villanous Misrepresentations of Things; all included in that Expression of St. Jude, *The Gainsaying of Core*; where indeed the word *Ἀντιλογία*, must include a Real Opposition; but a Verbal one is

* Vide Bishop of Clogher's Sermon, Jan. 30. 1715-6.

† Ἐβραῖος ὅτι ἐν ταύτῃ λέγειν ὁ Κορὴς, τὴ καὶ τὴν ἀπονομήν δοκεῖν.
Antiq. Jud. L. 4. C. 2.

also intended, and is the Primary Import of it: And there was a great deal of this. That they charged *Moses and Aaron* with *usurping* the Stations GOD had assigned to them, has been already observed; and that it was false. How unreasonably they *murmur'd* at the Conduct of *Moses*, appears from their insulting him in the following Words, *Is it a small Thing that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, to kill us in the Wilderness* — where they invidiously represent *Egypt* as a desirable Land, *a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, which it never pretended to; but abounded with Onions and Garlick. Besides, it was *a Land of Bondage*, where they were not allowed to serve their GOD according to his own Prescriptions; and where they suffer'd inhumane Hardships under that Tyrant, *Pharaoh*.

Numb.
xvi. 13.

THUS among our selves, the Malecontents have been made to believe that a Popish Religion and a *French Yoke*, under a spurious bigotted Impostor, are more desirable than the Christian Reformed Religion, and the Liberties that *Britons* are wont to be fond of, under a mild and gracious Prince, who *seeks our Welfare*.

THEY charge *Moses* with defeating the Expectations he had rais'd; *Thou hast not brought us into a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, or given us Inheritance of Fields or Vineyards*. Whereas he had brought them to the Borders of *Canaan*, and was ready to put them into actual Possession of it: But by their Ingratitude and Infidelity, their Seditions and Mutinies, and other Sins, *They* had provoked GOD to deny them an Entrance into it.

THUS had *We* a delightful Prospect of Peace and Publick Happiness, upon His Majesty's Accession

cession to the Throne ; till our Restless, Intestine Enemies disturb'd the Publick Tranquillity, and caused Confusion and War ; and then charged on *His* Government all the Mischiefs that they themselves are the immediate Authors of. But further,

Numb.
xvi. 3.

THEY carry on their Design against *Moses* with sulsome, hypocritical Pretences concerning the Peoples Sanctity ; *All the Congregation are Holy*, say they, *every one of them* ; by which they intended to flatter the People, and weaken the Interest of *Moses* and *Aaron*. But where was the Holiness of this Infidel, this Idolatrous, this Perverse Generation of Men ? If They were Holy, who was ever Unclean ? But by this they would suggest, that every Man had as much a Right to the Priesthood as *Aaron*, and that they were deprived of their spiritual Privileges. And,

WHAT nauseous, hypocritical Pretences to a Concern for a *Protestant Church*, are made by Those who have been attempting to dethrone a Protestant King, and enthrone a bigotted *Papist* ? A *Protestant* Prince and Family, who always espoused the Reformed Religion, in which they were educated, must be destroy'd, or driven away : That *he* who suck'd in Popish Principles while he was at the Breast, who has always declared for that Antichristian Religion, who is supported by the *Pope* himself, and by none but Popish Powers, may be advanced on the *British* Throne, to secure the Protestant Church ; and to protect and defend those who adhere to her Interests, in Opposition to Popery. And yet we have heard it does not appear that they so much as capitulated for the Religion they pretend so great a Concern for, or requir'd, much less obtain'd, a frail Promise that it should be preserved, or even
role-

tolerated*. But by such inconsistent Jargon as this, a deluded People are form'd for serving the Purposes of those who have been a long while *prating with malicious Words*; and speaking *Leasing*, in order to their becoming *bloody Men*.

WHAT egregious Falshoods, and what contradictory Lyes have they publickly vented against the best of Kings, and his Family; with an intent to poison the Minds of the People, and to inspire them with traiterous Resolves against His Person, His Government, and His Royal Descendants? What mean and ridiculous Calumny have they, not only whisper'd, but utter'd aloud, to depreciate him in the Esteem of the credulous Vulgar? *Their Lying Lips have spoken grievous Things, proudly and contemptuously.*

THE last Thing I propos'd under this Head, is,

Fourthly, TO take Notice of *some special Aggravations* with which *Korah's Rebellion* was attended; where amongst other Things that might be remark'd, I shall only insist a little on the *vile Ingratitude*, the *detestable Cruelty*, and the *unrelenting Obstinacy* of those who did abet and promote it.

1st, THEIR *vile Ingratitude*, and that both to GOD and to *Moses*. To GOD who had taken so much Care of them, provided so well for them, and set so wise and good a Judge and Ruler over them: One form'd for Government, and in every respect qualified for it. He had been educated in the *Egyptian Court*, in which he made a considerable Figure; for he was called *the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter*, and was adopted by him as

* Lord High-Steward's Speech.

her Son, to be his Successor *. He had great Experience in Matters of State, and understood the Mysteries of Government. In short, GOD had design'd, and fitted him in an uncommon Manner, for the great Undertaking. And what a tender Regard did he discover to *that* People, for whom he form'd, and over whom he fixed such a finish'd Chief? How base and ungrateful to GOD must their Rebellion against such a Governour be? And,

IF we consider how *Moses* behaved himself towards them, They will appear to have been ungrateful to *him* also, in the highest degree. He had offered them no Provocations, he had done them no wrong. As he himself appeals to GOD, he had *not taken one Ass from them*, neither had he hurt one of them. He had not abused his Authority in oppressing and injuring them in any particular, tho' they had been very peevish and provoking to him. As he was *Meek* beyond all Men, so they had given him frequent Occasion to show it. How often did he interpose betwixt them and Danger? How often did he turn away the Anger of GOD from them, and prevent their utter Destruction, when they had provoked GOD to lift up his Hand against them? Such was the Prince whom these *Ungrateful Israelites* did withstand.

HOW much does Our Own resemble him in the most agreeable Parts of his Character? He came not to us a Stranger to Government, but had been instructed in it from the beginning of his Life; He was a Sovereign Prince many Years before he was ours, and reign'd over a People

Numb.

xvi. 15.

* Vide Joseph. Antiq. Jud. L. II. C. 5.

who

who knew how to value and love Him, because they found he ruled them with so great Wisdom, and with the Tenderness which so much endears the *Father* of his People. And from the Time that he came amongst us, *We* have found him, as *They* did, a Prince of admirable Clemency and Meekness : The flagrant Proofs of this have brought his very Enemies under a Necessity of acknowledging it: But why then are they Enemies? Has He *hurt any one of them*? Whose Property did He ever invade? Where is the Man that ever He wrong'd, be he of high or low Degree? Who can assign any, the least Shadow of Grievance under his gentle Administration? It is the Voice of the Nation, that “* from the “ Moment His Majesty ascended the Throne “ to this Day, His Reign has been one Series “ of Wisdom, Justice and Clemency; His Labours constant, unwearied and successful “ to retrieve the Honour and Reputation of “ these Nations; to re-establish the Trade, “ and recover the Wealth of His Kingdoms, “ — All imaginable Encouragement has been “ given to the Church of *England*;” and a Right Reverend Prelate † observes, that “ his “ Kindness to *that* has appear'd in many “ signal Instances: Indeed in every Circum- “ stance where he had an Opportunity to show “ it.—All Tenderness has been shewn even to “ his Popish Subjects: His constant Care has “ been to procure the universal Good of his “ People.” *He has been indeed the Minister of GOD to us for Good, attending continually*

* *House of Commons in the Articles, &c.*

† *Bishop of Clogher's Sermon, Jan. 30. 1715-6.*

on this very thing. Now how heinous is their Ingratitude, both to GOD and to him, who Rebel against such a Prince? *They who render Evil for Good are his Adversaries.*

2dly. I MENTION'D the most detestable Cruelty as another Aggravation in the Crime under Consideration. For what would the Publick have suffer'd by the Loss of such excellent Governours as *Moses and Aaron*? And how deplorably miserable must their Condition have been, had such envious, ambitious, and implacable Men got into their Places? Men, who were for raising themselves on the Ruins of the Publick, and to whose imperious Lusts the People must have been Slaves. In our own Case,

INTO what a Deluge of Misery and Blood would those Men have plung'd us, who have exerted themselves to deprive us of such a King, and to impose on us a monstrous Religion, and a Despotick Power; which would have drawn a long Train of astonishing Evils, and have entail'd them on us and our Posterity? They would have wrested from us and them, all that is dear to us as we are *Men*, as we are *Britons*, and as we are *Christians*. *Blessed be the LORD! who has not given us as a Prey to their Teeth! our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler, the Snare is broken and we are escaped!*

3dly. THE last Aggravation I mention'd was the unrelenting Obstinacy of *Korah* and his Accompllices. They persist in their Sin to the very last. When *Moses* summon'd them to a Decision, by a solemn Appeal to GOD, the righteous Judge, *Korah* gather'd all the Congregation unto the Doors of the Tabernacle, and the Glory of the LORD appear'd unto all the Congregation. That thus they stand

it out at the very Tribunal of GOD. This was the highest Degree of audacious and harden'd Impiety.

WAR is, in the Nature of it, an Appeal to GOD; wherein the contending Parties wait for his Decision by the final Issues of it. Our Enemies have dared to venture on this: And tho' the Matter has been decided against them, they will not acknowledge any Convictions that their Cause is bad. I remember we were once told, that those Words were insisted on in their Camp; *The LORD GOD of Gods, the LORD GOD of Gods he knows; and Israel he shall know if it be in Rebellion; or if in Transgression against the LORD, save us not this Day.* But this was really the Language of their Enterprize, whether those Words were apply'd to it or no: And notwithstanding the signal Appearances of GOD against them, we find *they* and their Abettors discover the same Spirit, and allow the same Lusts of Envy, Malice, and Revenge to domineer within them, and to vent themselves in many Overt-Acts.

Joshua
xxii. 22.

THUS have we look'd into the Crime which contains *the Reason*, why the Persons, to whom the Text refers, *became a Sign*. I am,

III. TO enquire into *the Manner* how they *became a Sign*; and what may be the particular *Meaning and Import* of that Expression. Now in short, *They became a Sign* by that Remarkable, Penal Death, which GOD inflicted on them for their Sin: with Respect to which St. Jude observes in one Word, that they *perished*. And in the Words with which the Text is connected we are told, that *the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when*
that

that Company died: what Time the Fire devour'd two hundred and fifty Men: And of this we have yet a larger Account in Chapter the 16th of this Book. The Manner of Korah's Death has been controverted by learned Men, some think he was swallowed up by the Earth with Dathan and Abiram: And this Opinion is favour'd by our Translation, in the Words I mention'd last. But others conclude he was consumed by the Fire from Heaven, with the two hundred and fifty Men; which *Josephus* asserts. Reasons are offer'd on both sides, but I need not pursue the Enquiry at present; but shall only observe, that where our Translation favours the former Opinion, the Original may be understood as referring to the Substance, Goods, and Retinue of Korah: And so *Tremellius* reads it, *Abсорpsit eos, & quæ erant Korachi*. But whether he died by This Judgment or That, the Text refers to him as well as the rest; They became a Sign: Which Expression implies the following Particulars, viz.

THERE was something extraordinary in the Manner of their Death. Something that made it very observable, and obliged to a more attentive Regard. They did not die the Common Death of all Men; nor were they visited after the Visitation of all Men: But the LORD made a new thing, and the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallow'd them up and their Houses, with all that did appertain to them, and they went down quick into the Pit. And the Earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the Congregation: And there came out a Fire from the LORD, and consum'd the two hundred and fifty Men that offered Incense. A more large and particular Account of both these Judgments may be found in the Jewish Historian

Numb.
xvi. 29,
30, 32.

V. 33.
V. 35.

storian, to whom I have so often refer'd. Again,

THEIR becoming a Sign implies, that they were * *expos'd to publick Notice*. They were mark'd out for the Observation of the World. *Israel* was round about them, and GOD design'd that they should behold, and lay to Heart such an awful Event. Nor were they set forth for the Notice of *that* Age only; but the Providence was so extraordinary and memorable, that it might draw the Regards of every future Age: And that whenever Men read and hear this sacred Story concerning them, they may remark and adore the Conduct of GOD in this Affair. Nor were they barely expos'd to publick Notice: But in the next place,

SO expos'd, as *Monuments of vindictive Justice*. They became a Sign that GOD will *avenge* himself on his Enemies, and on all those who Rebel against lawful Magistrates discharging their Duty, and acting by his Authority. Their Punishment signifies, that such Offenders as these *Sin against their own Souls*, by incensing the Justice of GOD against them. It signifies to all, what Envy and Malice, what Pride and Ambition may bring Men to; when by indulging these Lusts, and endeavouring to gratify them, they provoke the Divine *Nemesis*, and extort the Judgments of GOD on themselves. It further implies, that

THEIR Punishment was design'd as a *Warning to others*. They were expos'd as Monuments of

* Exemplum omnium Qculis Propositum, ut est Erectum signum. Tremell. in Loc.

Revenging Justice, in Terrorem; that others may hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. These things, says St. Paul, were our Examples, so the intent we should not lust after Evil things, as they also lusted; that we may learn to dread those particular Sins that provoked GOD to such a Degree: yea, to fear offending him by any Sin: For other Sins, all Sins as well as These in particular, expose to his vindictive Wrath. Lastly,

THEIR Punishment signifies to the World, how much a gracious GOD does care for his Servants while they are found in the Way of their Duty. He looks upon their Enemies to be his own, and treats them as such. GOD vindicated Moses, while he destroy'd these Men; and hereby he informs the World how happy his Servants are, be they Magistrates or be they not. He espouses their Cause, and that will render them safe, whoever opposes them.

THAT in our own Case, which continues the Parallel with this Part of my Discourse, has been a solemn and tremendous Providence; very affecting to every serious and well-dispos'd Mind: It has forc'd our Attention for some time, and mov'd Compassion in every Breast, an uncommon Compassion for the deceas'd Sufferers, and for their greatly afflicted, surviving Relatives.

SOME who were famous in the Island; who strove again King GEORGE, in the Company of other Conspirators, when they strove against the LORD, did lately suffer that Capital Punishment to which the Justice of the Nation had adjudged them: And they became a Sign. They died, but not the common Death of all Men: They were visited, but not after the Visitation of all Men: But by such a Righteous, Punitive Stroke, as left them dead, in that very Instant wherein they appear'd

pear'd in a vigorous, florid Health. They were expos'd to publick View in their Death, and made a Spectacle to an innumerable Crowd of Beholders; and that too, as *Monuments of Revenging Justice*: Of the Justice of GOD, which deliver'd them into the Hands of their Injur'd Prince; and of the Justice of the Nation, which deliver'd them over to the Executioner: Not from any Hatred to their Persons, but for the Punishment of their Crimes, and for a *Warning to others*: To others, in whom the Fear of Punishment, may supply the want of Vertue enough, to deter them from sinning in like manner. The Law would be but a *dead Letter* to many, if its Sanction were not executed on some [at least] of those who dare to transgress it. If Sinners were not apprehensive of this, their Hearts would be *fully set in them to do Evil*. And herein GOD has discover'd his Care of our KING, and of his Faithful Subjects; causing that Mischiefe to fall on their Enemies, which they design'd against Him and Them. If it had not been the LORD who was on our Side, now may we say, if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when Men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled against us.

IV. I SHALL now offer a few Things by way of Reflection on this Discourse, and so conclude.

First, WE may observe, that it is no new thing for the Wisest and Best of Princes to meet with Opposition and evil Treatment from ungrateful and seditious Men. The best and clearest Title to Government; the most eminent Vertues, such as Meekness, Clemency, and universal Goodness; the greatest Obligations that can be laid

on a People, will not restrain such wicked Men from the vilest Designs. That which has happen'd in our Days, and to our own KING, be-
fel *Moses* in his, and many more in the Times betwixt them.

Secondly, WE may conclude from the Premises, that *it is the Will of GOD that such Rebellious Men should suffer for their Sin.* No wonder that their guilty Confederates should murmur when they do so; as the *Israelites* did in the Case of *Korah* and his Company; tho' the Hand of GOD did inflict their Punishment in so immediate and visible a manner. *All the Congregation of the Children of Israel murmur'd against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the People of the LORD:* by which GOD was provok'd to destroy many Thousands of them.

THUS we hear an unreasonable Noise about Severity, a loud Out-cry against the shedding of Blood; because the Laws have been executed on some few amongst many Thousands of Traitors; and those few condemn'd by the greatest Authority, after the fairest Proceeding against them, and a free Confession (or in the Cases of others, the fullest Proof) of the Blackest Crimes; and this Out-cry is made by that very sort of People who threaten'd the most barbarous and cruel Things against the Friends of the Government, when they presum'd that Matters would succeed as they wish'd. I have heard of some who have talk'd of walking deep in the Blood of their Fellow-Citizens; and of hanging them up at the Sign-Posts. One was threaten'd to be put in a Barrel with Nails, and roll'd down a Hill, for having attempted some Service to his Country, when the Rebellion was forming. These things I have heard from the Persons to whom they
were

Numb.

xvi. 41.

Ver. 49.

were said; and *they* were such as had no way *deserv'd* to suffer, except a Regard to GOD and Religion, a Love to their native Land, and the running some Hazard to serve it, merited such Usage as this. We could also remind these *Merciful Complainants* of those Times wherein the Men of their Principles inflicted *far worse Severities* on *much greater Numbers*, who never sinn'd with those Aggravations that the present Sufferers did. I'll only mention the Name of *Jefferies*, and you'll think of his cruel Proceedings against some, who oppos'd a Prince that had violated the most solemn Oaths and Promises, with a Design to deprive his People for ever of their Laws, their Liberties, and their Religion. But NOW a mild and righteous Government is calumniated without Reserve, for punishing a few of the greatest Enemies it has. But what Security could it have, that such Men would not embrace the next Opportunity to disturb the Publick Tranquility, and to destroy their Neighbours, were they now left to triumph in Impunity? Has not the World seen, that they are not to be won by the most engaging Candor, Clemency, and Goodness; but are implacable against all These? And is it fit that the Friends of their King and Country should be the *only* Sufferers on such an Occasion? How much fatal Mischief has been done to great Numbers of *These*, by cruel and unnatural Men? Many have been plunder'd of their Goods and Estates; their Lands have been laid waste, and their Houses demolish'd or burnt. Not a few have been dangerously Wounded, lost their Limbs, and hardly escaped with Life: Yea, many have lost their Lives, and many their dearest Relations and Friends. A brave Man
and

and an illustrious Patriot *, of equal Quality with the Highest of those who have suffer'd by publick Justice, falling into the Hands of *their* cruel Confederates, was abus'd in a manner unheard of before; and contrary to all the Laws of Humanity and Arms, receiv'd, as we were told, no less than seventeen Wounds: and after having sustain'd a great deal of Misery and Pain, at length *expir'd*, universally lamented by good Men. Now is it a reasonable thing, that those who have contracted the blackest Guilt, should stand on better Terms than honest, Loyal Subjects; than brave and zealous Patriots? Meek and Merciful *Moses* saw it was high Time that such daring Offenders should be brought to Justice; and therefore calls them forth to their Doom: And GOD himself works a Miracle for their sorer Punishment.

Prov.
xxiv. 21.

Thirdly, WE learn from what has been insisted on the *Wisdom and Goodness of Solomon's Advice*; *My Son fear thou the LORD and the King, and meddle not with them who are given to Change*. Some of the old Translations read it, Keep no Company with them who are seditious. We should fear the provoking of GOD, and exposing our selves to his Vengeance and Wrath. We should *fear the King* in subordination to GOD, whose Vice-roy he is, to consult the Good of the People, and to bring Offenders to Justice. And we ought to avoid the infecting Society of those whom we know dispos'd to Rebel against GOD and their Governours. What has been insisted on, illustrates and confirms the Reason with which the Wise Man enforces that Advice: *For*

V. 22.

* Earl of Forfar.

their Calamity, says he, shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the Ruin of them both? i.e. How great a Destruction may befall both those who fear not GOD, and those who fear not the King; or both those who are given to Sedition, and those who meddle with them. Elsewhere he tells us, *An evil Man seeketh only Rebellion, therefore a* Prov. xvii. *cruel Messenger shall be sent against him.* II.

Fourthly, WE may infer, the Equity and Impartiality of a Divine Process, and of the Judgment of GOD: THEY became a Sign. It refers, as you have heard, to all the Heads of the Rebellion: The chief Men of the Tribes, the Princes of the Assembly, and the Sons of Levi. The great GOD does not punish the Sinners of low Degree only, and let the High ones escape. He does not inflict his Judgments on some belonging to the Tribes more remote from himself, and suffer the Sinners in that which was near to him, to pass with Impunity. No, his Wrath is revealed against the Famous Men, the Men of Renown when they Rebel: and his Judgments follow the Sons of Levi, when they are as guilty as others. Which Conduct of GOD teaches us, that this is amongst the Things which belong to Prov. *the Wise*; it is not good to have respect of Persons in xxiv. 23. *Judgment.* It would be an unrighteous thing to spare the more exalted Sinners, and punish the inferior ones only; when their Guilt is the same in its general Nature: But in the former, aggravated and enhanced by the Circumstances of their Character and Influence. Others are encourag'd to venture themselves under their Conduct; and frequently follow, for this Reason only, Because such are their Leaders. With this View the Traitors of greater Name do frequently become such; as is publicly acknowledged

ledg'd by the Chief of those who have fallen a Sacrifice to Justice; he * *hoped by the Example he gave to have induced others* —

Fifthly, WHAT Reason have we to bless GOD, on the Behalf of those who are preserved from such aggravated Guilt, and the Judgments consequent on it?

When we behold others made a Sign, and are led by their Punishment to reflect on their Crime; this should dispose us to bless GOD that none of our selves, none of our Relations or Friends, have been drawn away, by any Temptations, to sin in this Manner; and to expose themselves to so much Distress and Suffering. What Reason have *We* in particular to bless GOD that we hear not of a Man of our Persuasion found in the vile Confederacy, or an Accomplice in the Design? Upon this Account we are maligned and hated, and even insulted by those who dare to discover their good Wishes to that cursed Cause: This is the Reason of those Disturbances we have lately met with in some of our Places of Publick Worship; and that when the known Design of our meeting together has been to pray for King GEORGE and the Nation, and for Success against the Rebellion: And while we bless GOD for it, we may justly Glory in it, and we will glory, that the Men whose Hands were ty'd up that they might not serve their King and their Country; and who are to this Day suffering under many unreasonable Hardships, for no real Crimes, must be acknowledged immoveable Friends to the Government, and the true Interests of the Nation: While They who were most industrious and for-

* Vid. *Late Earl of Derwentwater's Speech,*

ward in loading them with those unnatural Grievances, are now in Bonds for their vile Designs and hostile Attempts against the Publick Peace and Welfare. These are the Men, These and *their* Friends, who have abused us so long by laying to *our* Charge the Rebellion against King Charles I. in which we were no more concern'd than themselves, and perhaps *our* * *Fathers* less than theirs. But, pray who are the Rebels now? Who, but the Men from whom we have heard so much of *Non-Resistance and Passive-Obedience*? Who, but the Men that would allow the Character of Good and Loyal Subjects to none but themselves? And *These* rebel at a Time when they cannot, with any Colour of Reason, pretend an Infringement of their Liberties, an illegal Seizure of their Properties, an arbitrary Invasion on the Constitution; or any of those Grievances, which, their *† own Historians* acknowledge, provok'd to the *Civil-War* in 41. *These* cannot pretend to side with any Part of the *Legislature*, as the Men of that Day did; for they who have taken up Arms now, are declared Enemies to King, Lords and Commons at once.

* My own Father was threatened that a Gibbet should be set at his Church Porch, or at his own Door, and be hang'd upon it, for preaching on these Words, during the *Usurpation*, Ezek. xxi. 27. I will Overturn, Overturn, Overturn it, and it shall be no more; until he come whose Right it is, and I will give it him. And he was wont to observe the 30th of January as a Day of Humiliation.

† Vid. Clarendon, Vol. I. 8vo. p. 67, 68. & alibi.

IT is our Happiness and our Honour, that we have *not* come into the Secret of these Men, nor would we be united to their Assemblies; but whatever † Divisions there have been of a lesser Kind betwixt us and any other good Men who are Friends to the Government, They and we equally agree in our Obligations to submit to, and support it; and therefore we cannot discover the least Shadow of a Reason why we should not have the same Legal Capacities to serve, or defend it, as occasion may offer.

Lastly, Upon the Whole, LET us observe, adore and improve the Conduct of Providence, and magnify GOD. We should be wise and observe these Things. The Awefulness and Importance of such Events demand our most serious Thoughts. The Wisdom, the Justice of GOD, and his Truth appearing in the Accomplishment of his Threatenings, oblige us to revere and adore. We should improve the divine Conduct, by being solicitous to stand on good Terms with GOD through Jesus Christ; and by exciting in our selves a holy Fear of Him and His Judgments. We should praise and magnify His Name for espousing the Interests of Those who commit themselves and their Cause unto Him, and for delivering them out of the Hands of all their Enemies. Let us particularly bless GOD for His Goodness to our Native Land, that instead of permitting our Enemies to make us a Scene of Slaughter and Destruction, he has caused Them to become a Sign; and that through His Favour, our King is able to say,

† Vide Archbishop of Canterbury's Sermon before the King, Jan. 30. 1715-6. p. 10, 11.

Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me : Thou hast also given me the Necks of mine Enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. And above all, let us bless his holy Name for securing to us the Gospel and the Religion of Christ, with the Liberty of Worshipping Him according to His own Appointment ; when our Enemies were endeavouring to pour in upon us whole Legions of Antichristian Impostors, who would have said to our Souls, bow down that we may go over.

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